

Release

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International Paper grant supports forestry/environmental education

Forestry partners use \$5,000 appropriation to buy Project Learning Tree activity guides

AIKEN, S.C.— Partners from the state's leading forestry organizations held the 25th annual SC Sustainable Forestry Teachers' Tour, based in Aiken, June 19-23, made possible in part by a generous \$5,000 grant from International Paper.

The Teachers' Tour provides educators with an unbiased look into sustainable forestry and its impact on our economy, environment and quality of life. The tour takes teachers to various forest product mills, public and private forests, historic sites and forest harvesting operations. Educators learn from professionals about current conservation issues, sustainable forest management, history, mathematics, engineering, technology and much more.



Educators from around the state who participated in the SC Sustainable Forestry Teachers' Tour attended the sponsors' dinner at the Old Timber Lodge in Edgefield, S.C., June 22.

During the weeklong tour, Forestry Commission Environmental Education/Project Learning Tree coordinators Matt Schnabel and Beth Foley led a PLT training in the *Explore Your Environment: K-8 and Green Jobs: Exploring Forest Careers* activity guides. The activity guides were provided at no cost to the teachers, thanks to the grant from the International Paper Foundation that was awarded to the SC Project Learning Tree program. The grant money was used to purchase guides for students majoring in education, forestry or natural resources at SC institutions for higher learning and in-service teachers who participate in a professional development event.

By getting PLT materials into the hands of educators and forestry professionals, the program helps ensure that SC students, and therefore the future citizens and leaders of South Carolina, are able to think about complex environmental issues and form conclusions on how to act. Educators from around the state who participated in the SC Sustainable Forestry Teachers' Tour visited, among other forestry-related businesses, the Eastover paper mill run by Sylvamo. At the paper mill, they met International Paper procurement foresters Michael Walker, Justin Demiter and Chase Bettis who gave an overview of the mill and explained their jobs procuring wood for the mill.

The tour is sponsored by the Forestry Association of SC (FASC) with the support of the SC Forestry Commission, the SC Timber Producers Association (SCPTA) and many other forestry organizations and businesses.

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